

# OUR PATENT LAWS

*(Originally Published in 1890)*

REVISED TO SUIT THE PRESENT SITUATION.

With an additional Article on

**"AMERICAN COMPETITION,"**

CLOSELY BEARING ON THE SUBJECT.

BY

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*JANUARY, 1900.*

OUR PATENT LAWYER

THE PATENT OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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## PREFACE.

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THE Article on "Our Patent Laws" was originally written and published by me in December, 1890, when the Renewal Fees from after the fourth year to the fourteenth year of each Patent amounted to £150, and the following paragraph then terminated the Article :—

"It requires no special Act of Parliament to redress many of the grievances mentioned, and I would particularly call the attention of Members of Parliament to the following words, which appear in the 'Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1883,' and which, I think, will sufficiently meet the case:—

*"Such fees as may be from time to time, with the sanction of the Treasury, prescribed by the Board of Trade."*

"And, again :—

*"The Board of Trade may, from time to time, if they think fit, with the consent of the Treasury, reduce any of those fees."*

"It is to be hoped that the Board of Trade will now consider that the time has come for the substantial reduction, if not the total abolition of some of these harassing fees and deadweights on the progress of Invention."

The Article in pamphlet form obtained a large circulation, and was mainly instrumental, aided by the able assistance of Sir John Leng, M.P., and others in Parliament, in inducing Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to reduce the amount of Renewal Fees from £150 to £95, at which sum they now stand.

The undernoted having this month appeared in the London Press :—

"The Press Association learns that Mr. Ritchie, the President of the Board of Trade, has appointed a Departmental Committee upon the subject of Patent facilities, and that the following are the official terms of the reference :—

"To consider various suggestions which have been made



for developing the benefits afforded by the Patent Office to Inventors, and Report. The Committee is to be constituted as follows :—

MR. F. J. S. HOPWOOD, *Chairman.*

MR. EDWARD CARPMAEL, *President of the Chartered Institute of Patent Agents.*

MR. C. N. DALTON, C.B., *Comptroller-General of Patents.*

MR. J. A. KEMPE, *Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Customs.*

MR. S. E. SPRING RICE, C.B., *of H.M. Treasury.*

MR. ARTHUR NEEVES, *of the Board of Trade, Secretary."*

I have, at the suggestion of many friends interested in Invention, revised the Article to suit the present circumstances, and have at the same time appended additional matter dealing with "American Competition," and closely bearing on Invention and the commercial prosperity of the country.

When it is borne in mind that our two great rivals in the commercial supremacy of the world, Germany and the United States of America, each possess an almost perfect Patent System by which Invention is encouraged, protected, and fostered in a manner that puts to shame the Patent System in vogue in the United Kingdom—and which system in this country is more of a mere farce than anything else—it surely behoves our Statesmen to give their immediate attention to this most vital, but at present weak, point in our industrial and commercial armoury.

The appointment by the Government of the Departmental Committee referred to is a good augury : let us hope that important results will follow, and that a new and comprehensive Act of Parliament will soon be enacted, giving effect to wise recommendations of the Committee and putting Inventors and Invention here on an infinitely better footing, in order that the industry and commerce of our grand Old Country may continue to flourish unabated.

JAMES KEITH.

London, January, 1900.

# OUR PATENT LAWS.

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SEVENTEEN years have elapsed since Parliament, in its wise discretion, enacted what is called "The Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1883," and the Comptroller-General has, in accordance with the requirements of that Act, recently published the annual Report for 1898. I would commend the careful study of this report to all who take an intelligent interest in our national progress in Invention, and in the industrial arts and sciences, as it appears to me to be an eminently practical discourse on the absurdity of our antiquated Patents' system in this country.

Unlike our Government, the Government of the United States encourages Invention by every means in its power, charging only the lowest possible fees for Patents—viz., £7 for a period of 17 years, and scrupulously rejecting as non-patentable all applications for any contrivances or processes that have ever been known to have been previously in use in any other part of the world. In order to ensure novelty, a body of experts is provided in the American Patent Office, whose duties are to see that no applications for Patents are passed if they are in any wise similar to existing Patents or even to former rejected applications. By this means the full value and the best possible protection are practically assured to American Patents, should these ever afterwards come to be disputed. As already pointed out, all this is secured by a first and total payment of £7 to the Government on every American Patent, which gives protection for the full term of 17 years. The Americans thus run their Patent Office Department most efficiently, and yet economically, for the sole good of the country, wisely resolving not to retard the march of commercial progress by unduly taxing Invention. This far-seeing policy gives a stimulus to genius and Invention, and enables the American



people to take their proper place in the van of industrial and scientific progress. It may, however, be said by some, "This is all very fine, but does it pay?"

The best answer to this is the mere statement that not only do our American cousins get the credit—rightly or wrongly—of being the most ingenious and progressive people on the face of the earth, but the policy adopted appears otherwise to pay so well that there are millions of dollars in solid cash lying to the credit of the Patent Office in Washington. This accumulated surplus is used solely as a reserve fund for further perfecting the machinery of the Department, and for giving, if possible, better service to the nation in the publication of Patents' documents, &c.

In strange contrast with the successful policy in vogue in the United States, our British Government and Parliament seem to imagine that it is for the best interests of this country that an entirely different course be pursued in the formulation, enactment, and procedure of our Patents laws. Until the Act of 1883 was passed, the policy in this country was to make it as difficult as possible for working men and inventors generally to patent and protect their inventions, while, after all, the assumed protection granted was a mere sham. The natural results followed: comparatively few Patents were even applied for, and not much more than the half of these were carried beyond the third year stage—when (under the 1852 Act) the £50 tax or the first of the after fees began—and only a very few Patents, indeed, ever completed the full term of fourteen years. The Patents' Act of 1883, or the present Act and its amendments, changed matters considerably, more especially in the earlier stages, and, so far as the primary fees are concerned, for the completion of the Patents during the first year, there is nothing now to find much fault with. Unfortunately, however, the total amount of what I call the iniquitous after fees, from after the fourth to the fourteenth year, remains out of all proportion to the necessities of the case—viz., £95 on each patent, payable by fixed yearly instalments, if so desired, and it is these after fees that are so oppressive and that undoubtedly ought to be abolished or further very considerably reduced. A Patent is now granted in this country for a

term of four years on payment of £4 to the Government—viz., £1 on the lodging of the application and £3 on the complete filing of the Patent during the first year, and it is very instructive to note from the Comptroller-General's reports how even this slight concession affected the number of applications for Patents whenever the new Act came in force.

In 1883, the last year under the old Act of 1852, the total number of applications for Patents amounted to 5,993. In 1884, when the new Act came in force, the applications for Patents amounted to no less than 17,110, an increase of nearly 300 per cent. over the number in the previous year. Since then the increase has continued, in 1889 the number of applications amounted to 21,008, while in 1897 the number reached the high-water mark of 30,952, which was in the one case over 350 per cent. and in the other case over 500 per cent. more than the applications in 1883 under the old Act. The Comptroller-General stated in his Report for 1889 that :—  
 “The number of applications for Patents in 1889 exceeded those of 1888 by nearly 10 per cent., an excess considerably above that of any previous year since 1884.” There can be no doubt, therefore, of the soundness of the new policy of reducing the initial cost of Patents effected by the Patents Act of 1883. Nor can there be any doubt as to the unsoundness of retaining some of the greatest faults of the old Act in the new one, by the continuation of the burdensome after taxes or renewal fees, amounting to £95, on every Patent kept in force after the fourth year. I think the following figures from the report of 1889 will conclusively prove this. Out of 9,984 Patents for the year 1884, and out of 8,775 for the year 1885, remaining in force, under the 1852 Act, to the end of the fourth year, only 32 of those for 1884, 13 of those for 1887, and only 4 of those for 1888, were kept in force till the seventh year by the payment of renewal fees! (Under the 1852 Act the £100 tax was due to be paid at the end of the seventh year.) Less than 7 per cent. of all the Patents granted and sealed are on an average kept in force to the end of the thirteenth year, by payment of renewal fees (as seen in the returns for 1886, Appendix H<sup>1</sup>), the rest of the Patents being dropped long before the



dates mentioned, principally on account of these fees ! There is said to be a twofold object in imposing the objectionable renewal fees : first, to reduce the number of useless Patents, and secondly, and principally, to enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to increase the revenue for Governmental purposes. No doubt there are many useless Patents, and these are due in a great measure to the want of a proper system of searching by experts in the Patent office, prior to the granting of the Patents, similar to that which exists in the United States.

Useless Patents, however, invariably die a natural death, and that very speedily, and they generally require no assistance to help them out of the way. In trying to weed out the worthless Patents by this rather clumsy and antiquated method of taxation, a great many valuable Patents are sacrificed, and the nation and the business of the country suffer accordingly. Surely things have come to a pretty pass in this great, free, and enlightened country, if it is found to be necessary to put a drag on the wheels of progress by taxing invention out of all reason, in order to raise a revenue for carrying on of other Government work !

A more reasonable plan would be to prevent the granting of useless, impracticable, and anticipated Patents by expert search and examination as regards novelty, practicability, and validity, prior to the entertaining of the applications at all, as is done in Germany and the United States.

The total receipts in the Patent Office for 1898 for Patent, Design, and Trade Mark Fees, and Publications, were £223,419, and the total expenditure, including Pensions and cost of New Buildings, was £101,048 11s. 5d., leaving the handsome surplus of £122,370 8s. 7d. for the Government. To wring over £122,000 annually out of its inventors is, in these days of keen competition, economically unsound and commercially suicidal. The total amount of renewal fees received in 1898 amounted to £122,987, which is only a little more than the total surplus of £122,370 8s. 7d. referred to. It will thus be seen that there is no necessity for the levying of these unjust and injurious after taxes in order to make the Patent Office Department self-supporting, as, even under the present



restrictions, supposing the renewal fees had been abolished, there would only have been an apparent deficiency in 1898 of £606 11s. 5d., which would have been more than made good by the undoubted increase in the number of applications under a more enlightened system. On studying the report, it will be noticed that very much less than half the number of applications for Patents in 1897-1898 were sealed and carried on to the end of the fourth year. This is, of course, a decided loss to the Department, and there is absolutely no necessity that such should be the case under proper regulations. Supposing that all the renewal fees—amounting to £122,987 in 1898—had been abolished, and a fixed and final charge of only £4 had been made on every one of the 27,659 applications for Patents in 1898, and that the said £4 was the total cost of each Patent, under ordinary circumstances—for, say, fourteen years—there would still have been a surplus over expenditure of £40,476. Or, again, supposing a fixed and first charge of, say, £7, was made on every Patent, as is the case in America, and that all the after taxes or renewal fees were abolished, and that this arrangement had been in force and applied to the 27,659 applications in 1898, the result would have been a surplus over expenditure of the large sum of £151,112. It might be said, however, that the full number of 27,659 cases mentioned might not have been applied for, far less carried through, under such an arrangement, and this is a reasonable objection. To meet this, however, suppose we take the 27,659 applications which actually paid £1 on each application in 1898 (that fixed charge of £27,659 remaining amongst the receipts), together with the actual Patents sealed, and which remain in force to the end of the first four years, numbering, in 1898, 14,063, at a fee of £6 each for sealing and making good, the result would be a surplus of £41,877 ; £7 being thus still the total charge on all the sealed Patents for the full term of fourteen years.

Should any of these suggestions, or anything approaching them, ever be carried out, and should the surplus over expenditure be applied towards perfecting the machinery of the Patent Office, or otherwise giving better service to the country in cheapening the securing of good, valid, and,

above all, novel Patents, invention would be immensely fostered and encouraged. As to the length of time of the so-called protection granted to an inventor, I should say the term of fourteen years in this country is too short, the seventeen years' term in America being much more just and reasonable ; besides, if the term were seventeen years, full advantage could be taken of British Patents patented simultaneously in the United States, whereas at present there are practically three years cut off the life of a British Patent protected in the States, owing to its lapsing in the fourteenth year.

It should be borne in mind that a Patent at present is simply a contract entered into between the Government and the inventor, by which the inventor is bound to make public every detail of his invention, and produce drawings, so that any ordinary practical man can afterwards work from them. The inventor thus hands over the result of his brain labour to the nation, and he only gets the privilege of exclusively using and controlling his own invention for at most fourteen years on his paying certain fixed charges. Should any of these fees not be paid, the Patent from that moment becomes null and void. If, again, the fees are all regularly paid, after the term of fourteen years has been completed, the invention becomes public property. As to protection, no real protection is given, farther than if the inventor has to go to law to uphold his rights, and ultimately wins his case—after having, perhaps, been practically ruined in law costs—the decision is upheld.

As regards the right of appeal even up to the House of Lords, in reference to actions for infringement, and against the decisions of the lower courts, the present law in this respect is undoubtedly a great discouragement, and, in most cases, a source of persecution to the best class of inventors.

What ordinary inventor, for instance, can continue to fight, say, a great railway company or a millionaire for infringement, whose long purses alone enable them to carry on the warfare to the bitter end in the face of just and undisputed decisions against them in Court after Court below ?

It is notorious that many inventors are irretrievably



ruined in their attempts to protect themselves against unscrupulous infringers, who in many cases know that they have only to fight long enough to win, because the prosecutor cannot afford to continue to prosecute for want of means.

Surely there ought to be a limit to the right of appeal, when the justice of one or two decisions in any case of infringement appears to be indisputable, long before the House of Lords can be reached?

A Patent has generally to be patiently worked out and perfected in detail through a long course of years before the inventor gets any return. In fact, it is the exception, and not the rule, for any Patent to pay the inventor much before the full term of fourteen years is up. In the majority of cases it is the nation that benefits by inventions, and not the inventors, who, as a rule, remain poor men, spending their all in their endeavours to excel their previous efforts.

As the case stands, invention in this country is most decidedly discouraged, while, on the other hand, every encouragement is given to it in the United States.

Let us compare the difference in Government charges alone. It cannot be too often repeated that every invention patented in this country costs the inventor or patentee the sum of £99 in Government fees for a term of fourteen years, the said fees having all to be paid within thirteen years at latest from date of the application for the Patent.

The same invention, if patented in the United States, will only cost the inventor or patentee the sum of £7 in Government fees for a term of seventeen years, paid once and for all at first. In any case the United States Patent will be much more valuable than the British Patent, by the fact that no Patent is granted in the States until it has been shown that the invention is absolutely novel, whereas, it is notorious, that anything almost can be patented in this country, whether novel or otherwise, if the wording of the application and specification be grammatically expressed and the fees paid. The result very often being almost endless and ruinous litigation.

In financial language, therefore, a Patent in this country costs in Government fees alone more than 1,300 per cent.

more than a similar patent, for a longer period, costs in America, and yet we find people in this country expressing surprise at the inventive genius of the Americans! The Americans are, undoubtedly, far ahead of us in the invention and application of automatic and other light machinery, and, considering the advantages they have had over us for so many years, this is not at all to be wondered at. To assert, however, that the American people are a more clever race in the matter of invention than the people in these islands, is incorrect, as the Americans themselves freely admit.

In the matter of Invention, as well as in most other things, we, in this country, only require to have the same opportunity as our competitors on the other side of the Atlantic. to hold our own.

This, too, is rendered doubly necessary since the passing of the High Tariff Bills by the American Government, which Bills are meant to act the part of a Chinese wall, and so prevent us competing at all in the United States. An American of note stated at a meeting in London some years ago, that he could not imagine why we in Great Britain should hesitate about adopting any suggestions or better system of doing things from America, considering that they, the Americans, had copied so extensively from us, even though they may have improved on some of the originals.

There are some peculiarly constituted individuals who believe and who do not scruple to tell us—even in this nineteenth century—that there should be no Patent laws as they do not believe in inventions, and who nominally go upon the principle that “there is nothing new under the sun,” &c. Even these wiseacres, however, do not hesitate to take full advantage of the railways, and steamboats and other brilliant products of invention, when it suits them to do so. Fortunately for humanity, the number of such people grows less day by day; though, unfortunately, there are large numbers of another class who see no harm in appropriating the results of the inventors’ brains and genius without payment or even acknowledgment.



## AMERICAN COMPETITION.

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THE aspirations of Mr. Rhodes in the City of London, the pessimism of Mr. Courtney in the House of Commons, and the views of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, expressed in the press within the past year, concerning the commercial future of Great Britain in view of the American competition in our midst require to be answered in a practical manner.

As has already been so well said, we in this country only really require "equality of opportunity" to hold our own against the whole world. Unfortunately, however, we have not this "equality of opportunity" which is so absolutely necessary in the successful competition with the other branch of the English-speaking race in the United States, although why this should be, in the year 1900, is somewhat of a mystery, and may best be answered by British statesmen and leaders, who are mainly responsible for the existing state of matters here.

Mr. Courtney asked why the Americans were beating us in the production of steel, and in the furnishing of steel bridges, and were supplying us here at home with machinery which our own people could not produce, &c., but, in attempting to reply to his own pertinent queries, the right hon. gentleman scarcely even indicated the main reasons for the present extraordinary condition of things. It may be quite true that at this moment coal, iron, and steel of as good, if not better, quality can be produced in the United States at cheaper prices than in the United Kingdom, which may be accounted for to a large extent by the absence of royalties and the freedom from restrictions in America, and which are so burdensome on the prime cost

of these staples in this country ; but, even with all this granted, a more valid explanation is requisite, for the production of steel bridges, watches, printing machinery, sewing machines, steam pumps, typewriting machines, electric appliances, locomotives, food-working machinery, agricultural implements, &c., which necessitates the employment of the highest kind of skilled labour, in which the Americans excel, and with which they are now supplying the British and European markets, notwithstanding the high price of labour in the United States.

All the talk about the fault being with the workmen, and because of strikes and lock-outs in this country, is entirely beside the question, and amounts to self-deception on our part, as in the United States the workmen are more difficult to deal with, and are more unreasonable, while strikes and lock-outs there are of greater magnitude, and the consequences are, as a rule, infinitely more disastrous than they are here.

The evil lies far deeper, has been growing for the last twenty-five years, has been increasing rapidly during the past ten or twelve years, and has now got to an acute stage—and that evil is, as has been stated, the lack of “equality of opportunity” in the United Kingdom. In an article entitled “Our Great Competitor,” published in the *Nineteenth Century* in June, 1887, I called attention to the great disadvantages under which the people in Great Britain had to fight the commercial battle of life in comparison with their more favoured brethren in the United States, and a reference to some of the figures given in the article in question, now nearly thirteen years ago, together with some new points, may not be amiss at this juncture.

The British are equally clever and ingenious with the Americans, if not indeed more so, and Britons only require to be put on the same footing to run even with the Americans still, or to beat them in the race.

How stands the case, however?



Invention, which is the life and soul of progress to any nation, instead of being welcomed and encouraged, as it is by the policy of the American Government, is distinctly discouraged and clogged in this country by the policy of the British Government, with the result that Invention is still kept at a heavy discount by being unduly taxed, and by being utilised for the mere purpose of reaping a large revenue annually from its most talented and progressive countrymen (the inventors) without giving compensation of any kind of real protection, or in even any assurance whatever as regards novelty and validity. The British Patent system is a standing disgrace to the country, and is incomparable from every point of view almost with the Patent systems of Germany and the United States. There is no attempt in the British Patent Office to secure novelty, and when it is mentioned that, should two or more identical applications for the same "Inventions" be filed the same day and at the same hour at the Patent Office, the Comptroller (unless some outsider, who ostensibly knows nothing about the matter, lodges objections at his own charges) has no power to reject one of them (although the same may be already patented), and the granting of the Patents must follow in regular course if the drafting and the drawings, &c., are in order and the fees be paid, and there be no final outside opposition, the full value of a British Patent may be estimated.

The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, is mainly responsible for the Patent system at present in force in this country, and, although since "The Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1883," became law, sundry improvements have been effected by *outside pressure only*, still the whole system is radically bad, and ought in the interests, not only of inventors, but of the nation at large, to be entirely remodelled on something like the lines of the American Patent system, which, though not absolutely perfect, is the most perfect Patent system at the present time in force in any country in the world. The Government of the United States considers that an encouragement of invention benefits

the country, and gives a stimulus to the genius and inventive faculties of the people. It very wisely does not attempt to reap a revenue from the brains of its people ; but it rather puts a premium on Invention, instead of unduly burdening it.

The cost of transit of goods is very much heavier in Great Britain than it is in America, and our governing powers seem to agree with our great railway companies that our competitors from the outside ought to have the preference. To give a single case : goods can actually be sent from New York to London, *via* Liverpool or Glasgow, at a less cost for freight and rail carriage than the traders and manufacturers in this country can send similar goods by the same rail from Liverpool or Glasgow to London, or *vice versâ*. The railway interest seems to be all powerful in Parliament : the recent withdrawal of the Railway Regulation Bill by the President of the Board of Trade at the bidding of a deputation of railway directors is a strong case in point ; and it appears to be next to impossible to get inland rail rates for goods fixed at anything like reasonable figures unless by the direct interference of Parliament. All these heavy charges and drags on trade tell also very heavily on the wages of working people, as, the more trade is relieved, the better wages will be paid, and the shorter will be the hours of labour. This has been strikingly illustrated in the United States, and I think it will be found that it is only in those countries in which there are cheap rail or other carriage rates for goods, and in which there are no drags on the progress of man's Invention, that wages are really high.

While the cost of labour in America is so much more than it is with us, the American employer or manufacturer has the advantage of a better division of the working day than generally prevails in Great Britain. The working day in Canada and the United States is divided into two parts, there being only one break—viz., for dinner, in the middle of the day. This arrangement of working hours undoubtedly is more profitable for both employers and employees, and gives the American manufacturer advantage in many ways over the British manufacturer with his division of the

working day into three parts with two breaks, as those in this country who have adopted the eight hours day with only one break have demonstrated for some years past. Then, of course, the Americans have the privilege of sending in their manufactures to this country free of duty, while we are practically debarred from sending in our manufactures into the United States in competition by the high tariff wall built there to keep them out.

Thus, by the action (or want of action) of our statesmen for so many years in discouraging instead of encouraging and fostering our national progress in Invention and in the industrial arts and sciences, and by allowing such dead-weights as those described to hang so heavily on trade and on the wheels of industry, as well as because of the great progress made by the Americans in automatic machinery, &c., by the encouragement given them, and their adoption of more modern methods, with better organisation and freedom from prejudice and the use and wont ideas, our cousins on the other side of the Atlantic, by fortuitous circumstances, are ahead of us to the extent mentioned. Considering, however, the great advance the people of the United Kingdom have made during the past sixty years in spite of all the drawbacks, it surely stands to reason that, under more favourable circumstances, the advance will continue, and be proportionately greater.

It is satisfactory to note that only this month Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, in speaking at the annual meeting of the Court of Governors of Mason University College, Birmingham, urged the necessity for *specialised* instruction being taught students of the Universities in this country, which instruction, he stated, was so characteristic of Anglo-Saxons in the United States and Canada, and which countries sent out every year hundreds of young men fully equipped to carry on and maintain the great interests of their country; and the right hon. gentleman, in showing how to meet competition, added the following pregnant words:—

“He was quite certain, and he hoped he might be able to persuade his fellow-citizens of the truth of what he said,



“ that something of that sort was absolutely necessary if we  
 “ also were to hold our own We were in the midst at the  
 “ present time of an extraordinary prosperity ; but that  
 “ could not last for ever. There must come the usual  
 “ reaction, and then he foresaw a kind of competition to  
 “ which we had never hitherto been subjected. It was not  
 “ merely the competition of the Continent, which we had  
 “ felt in past times, with which we should have to deal, but  
 “ we should have to deal also with the still more keen com-  
 “ petition of our American kinsmen ; and unless we kept up  
 “ at least to their level, unless we were prepared to make  
 “ such arrangements as would enable us to take advantage of  
 “ the latest improvements in every department of scientific  
 “ work, he was quite certain we should fall behind in the  
 “ race ; and, if we once did that, it would be very difficult  
 “ indeed to retrieve our position.”

These words, or words to like effect, appear strangely  
 familiar to some of us who have been reiterating them in  
 the ears and before the eyes of our countrymen for so many  
 years past.

It is to be hoped Mr. Chamberlain will keep these wise  
 words of his in mind, and before long assist in—if he himself  
 does not initiate—the formulation and passing of enactments  
 through Parliament for the encouragement of every depart-  
 ment of scientific and technical work and Invention in the  
 United Kingdom.

Lord Rosebery, speaking at Chatham only the other day,  
 used the following eloquent language :—

“ I humbly think that in this country we live a great deal  
 “ too much from hand to mouth ; we do not proceed by  
 “ scientific method ; we go on the principle that things have  
 “ carried on so well, so far, that we are a noble nation ; that  
 “ we are very rich, that we are pretty numerous, and that  
 “ we have, so far, muddled out right in the end—(laughter)  
 “ —and, indeed, with our love of liberty, and with our free  
 “ institutions, it is not a very easy matter to get things

" placed on a scientific or methodical basis. What with the  
 " obstruction in Parliament, what with the obstruction of  
 " privilege, with the obstruction of prejudice, the difficulty  
 " of getting any reform carried through is so great that  
 " Governments, as a rule, and small blame to them, pre-  
 " fer to patch up and botch up any immediate difficulty that  
 " may be presented in our organisation, and pass on until  
 " some worse difficulty faces them. (Hear, hear.) I do not  
 " deny that we are as great a nation as any of our loud patriots  
 " may declare us to be. I will certainly not yield to any of  
 " them in my belief of our qualities and of our des-  
 " tiny ; but I say this, that we are a people of enormous  
 " waste. We waste simply by not pursuing scientific  
 " methods. I do not like to compare us with Germany. It  
 " is hardly safe to mention the name of foreign Powers, lest  
 " some innuendo be suspected or else some guilty thought  
 " in one's mind ; but, at any rate, we may be certain of this,  
 " taking Germany as an example of the opposite method of  
 " treatment—Germany is infinitely more painstaking and  
 " scientific in its methods than we are. But without taking  
 " as a model Germany or any other country, I believe if we  
 " wish to take full advantage . . . we must become more  
 " scientific in our methods. In commerce, in education, and  
 " in war we are not methodical, we are not scientific, we are  
 " not abreast of the more advanced nations of the day, and  
 " if we want to keep our place we shall have to consider the  
 " lessons we have been taught in this respect. Depend upon  
 " it, gentlemen, however brilliant you may be, the tortoise  
 " of investigation, method, and preparation will always catch  
 " up and overtake the hare which leaves everything to the  
 " inspiration and effort of the moment. We must consider  
 " deliberately, patiently, and scientifically the methods by  
 " which we have been accustomed to proceed, and see in  
 " what way they have fallen short, and determine to recon-  
 " sider and revise them. I believe that is the task which  
 " will occupy this Government, and perhaps many Govern-  
 " ments, before you will see your Empire as it should  
 " be. That task will have to be faced . . . and when  
 " that is done you will, as I honestly and conscientiously  
 " believe, have to set yourselves to the third function, and



“ the most important of all, that of setting your Empire on  
 “ a business footing. I am encouraged, Mr. Mayor, by one  
 “ circumstance, which I only learnt yesterday, to think that  
 “ you, in Chatham, have cause to be specially inspired in  
 “ this work. You wear on your neck the chain and badge  
 “ of the Doge of Venice. You must therefore always  
 “ remember, when you see that symbol, that it once adorned  
 “ the chief of a State scarcely less great than our own, not  
 “ less commercial, not less naval, not less predominant, and  
 “ which faded away like an empty dream because its rulers  
 “ took no thought for the future, and did not live abreast  
 “ of their times. I take it, then . . . . that you will strive,  
 “ each according to your lights, and each according to your  
 “ capacity, to take care that the Empire, in the future, shall  
 “ realise our ideal of an Empire, without menace and with-  
 “ out oppression, the model State ruled by the model  
 “ institutions, and inhabited by the model race.”

Mr. Courtney suggested a difficult task for statesmen of  
 the next generation ; but (as Lord Rosebery so convincingly  
 points out) I should rather say it was for statesmen of the  
 present generation to tackle the evils under which we labour  
 as a nation, and give us at least the “equality of oppor-  
 tunity” we are entitled to.

JAMES KEITH.